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ABSTRACT

This study explored change and development as a student attends college, focusing on the "other" education, that received outside the classroom. The 61 students who were interviewed attended Texas A&M University, a university distinguished by strong traditions and a distinct sense of what it means to be an "Aggie." Twenty-eight parents who accompanied their children to freshmen summer orientation exercises were also interviewed. Students were asked what they expected to learn and what they considered that they had learned outside the classroom, as well as how the traditions and legacy of Texas A&M affected their views of themselves and others. Study findings support the view that Texas A&M, as an institution, adopts the role of a deliberate socializing agent that may play a larger role in a student's development than other institutions. Students bring expectations with them to the University, including a widespread belief that it is the best education available in Texas and that a Texas A&M degree will open doors not open to other graduates. Students arrive on campus expecting the "other" education. They understand that they will change and expect to value the changes, but are uneasy about the creation of an intentionally developmental environment. They tend to bridle at the idea that change is intended by the administration of the University, and prefer to believe that their peers are the primary contributors to their socialization at college. (Contains 29 references.) (SLD)

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Traditions of Change: Student Expectations for the Other Education

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Paper presented at

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Introduction

Higher education and education in general have long been accused of engaging in the banking concept of education, in which "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider know nothing" (Friere, 1993, p. 53). The classroom is no longer a place where scholarly communication takes place, instead the instructors regurgitate facts that are deposited to the students. The students in turn receive, store in short memory and regurgitate later through examinations (Friere, 1993).

Recently, however, strides have been made to elicit more student participation in the classroom because student participation and effective lecturers are thought to foster critical thinking (McKeachie, 1978; Lowman 1988), less emphasis is placed on rote memorization and the reliance on dualistic knowledge approaches (Belenky et al., 1986; King, Kithecner, & Wood 1985: Perry, W 1981) to learning is decreased (Kloss, 1994).

Delpit, 1995, and Giroux,1994 note that providing students with a comfortable environment where they are able to raise questions or offer comments in class is likely to enhance their intellectual development, an activity that appears to be far more productive than mere "sit and git". However, the role that the professor plays is clearly still an external impetus in the intellectual development of the student. This may suggest that scholars traditionally have seen the classroom from the professoriate's perspective which may lead to, a one-sided interpretation that professors play a greater role in the classroom than they actually do. According to Fassinger (1995) the classroom should be viewed through a different set of lenses, that of the students in the classroom--that perhaps students and class traits may be better ways to instill critical thinking than relying solely

on the transformative educator (Giroux, 1994). Perhaps the professor does not have to be a thespian in order to elicit student responses or "make the students cry" as suggested by one student. In fact, this might suggest that student responses in the classroom need not be entirely Pavlovian in nature, the students must become active in transforming their educational experiences, and that perhaps the "tabla" is not so "rasa".

Classroom change is not the only kind of change that students undergo in college. At the crux of student development is the change that occurs due to peers, family and self. "Social integration, primarily through informal peer group associations, semi-formal extracurricular activities, and interaction with faculty and administration should increase the likelihood that the student will remain in college (Tinto, 1975, p.107)." Studies delineating student persistence and peer group affiliation add to the barrage of data that suggest that peers have a profound effect on student development. In a comprehensive summery of research on college students, Pascarella & Terrinzini (1991), and Feldman & Newcomb (1969) outlined the impact of peer group influence. They suggested that peer groups help students in securing their independence from parents, promotes the institution's intellectual and developmental growth goals, offer support mechanisms not met by faculty, encourage diversity, and reinforce student change . In addition, peers may motivate the student academically by providing a support network that influences a student staying or leaving college. These findings may have profound effects on the student, and more importantly, suggest that for student learning and growth to take place, students must actively engage in their environment Astin (1984) -- whether through classroom interactions or learning that takes place outside of the classroom.

Today student affairs professionals as well as many faculty stress that they too should incorporate care, community and service into the campus environment (Lincoln 1999)--whether directly through curriculum, indirectly through campus involvement or through interpersonal relationships developed with the student, professor and community.

The new campus environment attempts to embrace this pedagogy through student involvement on campus. Students are able to delve into multiple aspects of the "other "education, through student social organizations such as, fraternities, sororities in addition to organizations that specifically operate in the capacity of service.

The following paper will explore student change while in college. It will open by taking a brief look at student perspectives of the other education. Included in that conversation will be a brief dialogue on service and volunteerism. The section that follows will address traditions, legacy and how the Corp of Cadets coupled with the military history influences leadership perception on the campus. Lastly, the paper will address student change, specifically who students believe are responsible for their change while in college. Accordingly, we began the journey by asking students about activities and learning that occurs outside of the classroom.

Methodology

This research was carried out as a qualitative study of the change and development that occurs while students transition into college. The research design and methodology employed were guided by the many manuscripts supplied by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Lincoln (1998, 1999) that address the naturalistic or constructivist paradigm. In addition, ethnographic manuscripts supplied by Erlandson (1993), Spradley (1980),

Fetterman (1989), and Glaser and Strauss (1967) played a relatively large role and became quite significant in data acquisition.

The sample consisted of students and parents from multiple backgrounds, disciplines, and levels in their educational attainment in order to achieve a "wide angle view of the of events before conducting the microscopic study of specific interactions begins" (Fetterman, 1989, p. 43). The sample under investigation for this study consisted of 61 students that attended Texas A&M University. In addition, 28 parents that accompanied their sons and daughters to Freshmen Summer Orientation exercises, academic placement, and counseling sessions were interviewed. All parents interviewed during this study were White.

The Other Education

Texas A&M provides a variety of activities for all of its students to take advantage of. Several students spoke of the university's student activities offices where there are listed over 700 organizations in which students might participate. According to students, it is the sort of milieu with "something for everyone", a campus environment which may be important to recruiting efforts at the university. Several students suggested that Texas A&M allows students to participate in the "other" education more than at other universities.

However, students compare Texas A&M to universities that are uniquely different in size of the institution both physical and student body and missions of the university. Instead what the students seem to believe is that they have chosen an institution that will offer them more exposure to the other education.

For instance, the initial visit for the incoming freshman or transfer student to the institution includes a tour of the campus, in which the guide repeatedly informs them that Texas A&M offers over 700 organizations to its students. The student organizations are supported by an extensive cadre of student affairs professionals. These professionals sometimes come from the student body because Texas A&M houses a nationally known graduate program in Student Affairs that attracts students from throughout the United States.

The prestige of the graduate program coupled with a wide selection of students programs to choose from may serve as an explanation of why students are bitterly opposed to the idea that the purpose of this university is primarily for research, or as a haven for academics. The following student expresses his frustration at the idea of the institution only serving as an educational facility:

> You want to produce a student that really knows his business when they get out of here. Something that really bugs me that I've seen is people walking around campus. I don't know if I'm just classifying them or whatever, just bookworms, just geeks. You know they know their book knowledge but they couldn't wash their hair if they had to. They're not well-rounded people that know how to interact with other people (FG1.10/16/97 p.10).

The student echoes campus wide sentiment that "knowing ones business" outside of the classroom is paramount and should be incorporated into what is taught in the classroom. Students overwhelmingly referred to this notion of learning more as exhibited in the following commentary:

> ... I thought I would only get book knowledge--attend my classes and then leave, but I have learned much more than that" (FG2=10/21/97UG 1-27 p 18).

> ...Probably the least amount of education I have received is actually from the classroom-it sounds bad but I have learned a lot of things that will help me in the real world through extra curricular activities... (FG2=10/21/97U.G.10 card number 323)

Unlike the students that Horowitz (1988) describes in "The New Outsiders" the students at Texas A&M speak of knowledge gained through experience other than those gained through intellectual gymnastics in the classroom. They speak of friendship, "getting a life" and outside activities in addition to "book learnin'". In the following passage Jennifer reflects on her experiences both in and out of the classroom:

> ...but I think that if I had spent all of my time in the library studying I would not have grown as much as I have. I have learned a lot and I am learning a lot more now ...I think that getting the whole life experience together is much more important than focusing on one aspect FG2=10/21/97U.G. 19 card number 394 and 395).

A belief in academics is prominent in students' claims that they choose to attend the university for reasons of prestige, academic preparation and other scholarly endeavors. However, the students' voices resonate with overwhelming agreement that they receive "more" from Texas A&M than just the knowledge one acquires from the

formal classroom and books. Several students commented that A&M provided them with "more" than other equally prestigious universities could offer:

> I visited a lot of campuses that have the educational prestige, I guess, that I felt A&M had to offer me, but I felt that this campus was a lot friendlier." (FG5=4/16.98 UG 2 p2)

> I actually went to Baylor for a semester before I came to A&M. ...It's a lot more relaxed than Baylor was... and a lot more friendly also... I just like the people here a lot better (FG5=4/16.98 UG 2 p2).

They believe there is more to education than just the classroom, and expect to derive other lessons from the extra-class context. This notion of the well rounded student and the "other education" are recurring themes in the lives of students. During one interview with several freshman a student candidly commented that, the "other stuff", the lessons learned outside of the classroom are just as important as "the stuff" that you don't really need to know, lessons learned in the classroom:

> ...but I guess in my own head I was expecting to learn how to be on my own and how to deal with situations and also gain knowledge at the same time--become more knowledgeable... I realized once I got here that you have to learn all this other stuff that you don't even need to know...but, you learn also a lot of other good stuff from the 'other' education and just being on your own. **(FG10/21/97UG21 500)**

Other students struggle to find the words to describe the "other" education that they are receiving outside of the classroom. Sometimes they appear to be genuinely

perplexed of the thought of getting "more". The following students allude to the possibility that the university has something else to give them besides an education in the classroom, an education obtained outside of the classroom that helps in mastering scholastic goals.

> I made pretty good grades-I was capable of more. I realized at this university I get more. I could get by just going to class and making good grades, I have done that my whole life, but I knew if I put forth a little bit of effort because of what this university gives to its students I could get so much more out of it... (FG4=3/3/98.U.G. 1-27)

> What it comes down for me is that the university tries to enable us to have a very well rounded education. .. including either extra activities and not just ... the classes and everything. (FG10/29/97 page 16)

Students at Texas A&M stress that participation in the other education is through involvement in student activities and volunteer work. This allows the students to learn through friendships with other students, service organizations throughout the campus, outside activities, volunteer organizations, participating in the Corp of Cadets and other students organizations. The following student speaks of involvement encompassing different aspects of the university life and finding that special "fit" into the campus environment:

> You are not supposed to stress what groups to join [student is referring to serving as a resource, during orientation "Fish Camp" for incoming

> Freshman] but you are given an opportunity to see what else is out there...with things like fish Camp, I-camp and T-camp you get to see from other people's point of view. If they like it, what organization they are in, or what organizations cater to what types of people, and that gives an open door to go see what to join or what their interests are. That even provides them more of an experience, like a step ahead into the experience of getting involved" (FG4=3/3/98U..1-27 card number 500-501).

This "other stuff that you don't even need to know"--the stuff that is not graded, checked, marked, scantronned ®, nor critiqued becomes just as important as the knowledge learned in the classroom. This other stuff is incorporated though-out the university life and experience. The overarching characteristic of this education is that they receive it from a variety of life experiences: residence hall, with friends, in the course of campus student activities or volunteer work.

Service/Volunteerism

When referring to other education many students speak of joining organizations on campus. Some students suggest that they join the organizations to allow a break in the mundane life of academia; others join because of their interest in intramural sports, social, Greek, leadership or public service activities.

There are number of public service organizations that are available to students on campus that allow them to give back to the community. The Alpha Phi Omega Co-ed Service Fraternity students in particular are astute in their commitment to altruistic endeavors citing self reflection, accountability and genuine concern as reasons for their commitment to community service. These students take their commitment to service a

step further than the average student. The following student describes how her commitment to service was revealed to her:

> For me, it was the people that I met in APO, and the way we went out and helped other people to realize... I am fortunate, and my problems are so small, and not anything to be concerned with compared to what everyone is going through (FG2=10/21/97 UG 21 card number 406)

It is also interesting to note that, the APO students not only provide service to those in the immediate community in close and safe proximity to the university, they often push the envelope and visit the "other side of the tracks" to provide service to communities outside of the safe-haven that the university provides.

These students appear to be genuinely pleased with the notion of helping or serving. In one instance a student explains that he is not compensated for picking up excrement, but he unselfishly helps to clean because it not only needs to be done, it should be done. These students receive no campus wide recognition, nor do they receive, nor seem to solicit, pats on the back for a job well done. The feedback? Personal satisfaction and autonomy. They "feel good" for having helped someone.

Actually, the number of students on this campus involved in volunteer service activities seems extraordinarily high. They are atypical of the notion that the twenty-something's or generation-X'ers are selfish, greedy and self-consumed . Campus student affairs officials estimate that a large proportion of the undergraduate student body is involved in service activities of some sort. Service means more to them than receiving a T-shirt for a walk or run. The students were earnestly committed to social change and in

some instances it is "natural", suggest some students: "Service is such an integral part, we don't even think about it. It is just part of what we do" **(FG2=10/21/97UG300)**

Conservatism and Service

Research steadily supports the conclusion that high involvement in service activities should lead to a more liberal campus environment (Astin, 1978). It is interesting to note that college attendance is associated with increases in, academic knowledge, liberalism, tolerance for ambiguity and relativity and decreases in authoritarianism, dogmatism and stereotypic approaches (Strange & King 1981, p.293) However, judging from our respondents on this campus it does not.

Despite the high involvement of undergraduates in service activities, the campus supports and engenders an atmosphere which is conservative, politically, socially, racially, and religiously. During one interview a group of students spoke about the conservative environment on campus--a conversation which provided on some levels a light hearted, and candid discussion. However, after a reflective look into some of the other nuances brought out during this discourse, one might possibly be troubled by the rather bleak picture that one student paints through the following detailed dialogue:

> ...I think that it's great that it's a conservative town-that's what it's known for-but it really needs to emphasize other things more... . It just is too...close minded and ...it's not a real world situation.

> I have a friend that goes to UCLA...I was talking to him about A&M...And I was like, oh yeah, there's hardly any minorities and...I stated what it was like to go here.. usually everyone looks a lot alike...I

> mean everyone looks alike on this campus. We all go The GAP. We all go to Old Navy. We all go to the same mall.
>
> ....If I went to U.T, it would be totally different...If I walked on the A&M campus with purple hair, ...it would be like you don't look like us-you're not one of our clones anymore.
>
> We get sheltered and protected"(FG5=04/16/98U..page10).

Sheltered, protected, conservative: and parents want it that way. Parents want a solid education for their children in a safe, conservative and resistant to change atmosphere. Texas A&M seems not only to attract this type of individual but provides a welcoming atmosphere for conservatism, tradition and elitism. The following dialogue between two parents best illustrates this point:

> ...They (Texas A&M) seem to do a fantastic job here of not only in the classroom teaching, but teaching children-older children, young adults-social skills and what the world expects of them and how to best accomplish their goals in the world" (PG=6/18/98 p5).
>
> But you don't think that's a product of these children that come to this conservative atmosphere, they're coming from families-most of them from a family base which makes for a good person anyway. ...You have this draw that attracts these children. They don't see the freaks and weirdoes and they're attracted to this. So in general they will be working

> with a higher realm of human being in general. ... You are dealing with a certain level of child... and I think right here that you are fortunate that that is what draws or attracts-and you don't get the poor souls that you might get in lower-level university, or community colleges (PG=6/18/98 page 5).

The underlying assumption: that their children, who are not purple- haired nor attending The University of Texas are good. They will attend Texas A&M with other people who have raised children that are good, not purple-haired nor alums of University of Texas as well. In essence, Texas A&M provides a haven to those parents and students who are seeking refuge from the "poor souls" of the junior college or the freaks with the purple hair. This rather peculiar or idiosyncratic view of the university socialization process may be an artifact from the tradition and legacy that is very pervasive throughout the university.

Tradition and Legacy

Texas A&M was established in 1876 as an all male military school. In 1963 they opened their doors for the first time to women. Many of Texas A&M's traditions are rooted in the schools military ethos. For instance, the corps of cadets which has been an integral part of the A&M system since the institution opened in 1876. The corps boasts that it trains more than 2,100 men and women annually and is the largest uniformed body of students outside of the United States service academies. The mission of the corps is " to train leaders of character and competence for service to the state and

nation." (Schoemate, B. 1998 http://corps.tamu.edu) This commentary not only spills over into the lives of corps members but it is vehemently incorporated into the institution and the lives of the students who attend the university.

Consequently, several Texas A&M military traditions and legacies are pervasive throughout the campus activities and student life. For instance, it is very common to see senior Aggies strutting about in a slick pair of $900.00 maroon military boots. Students attend "Silver Taps" memorial services for Aggies who have died during the school year. "Muster" involves Aggies gathering at more than 400 locations across the state and around the world to honor all students and former students who have died since the last Aggie Muster. Students also take part in a host of other traditions that include intensive student participation. A 55 foot high bonfire that is built by students, yell practice lead by male cheerleaders, a curious celebration of graduation termed elephant walk, and the famous Aggie Ring are a few of the many traditional activities.

In addition, at Texas A&M even visitors are invited to indulge in the spirit of Aggieland where they are sometimes surprised that they must take off their hats in the Memorial Student Center and take care not to step on the surrounding grass on pain of confrontation by any passing student. The visitor to Texas A&M quickly sees and experiences throughout the university that the students at Texas A&M are a part of a rather peculiar brotherhood that is very loyal to the prestige and rank that the title Aggie holds.

The Corps of Cadets

> *"Give me an army of West Point Cadets and I'll win a battle, give me handful of Texas Aggies and I'll win a war" General Patton-following the Battle of the Bulge*

Texas A&M's unique traditions provides an encouraging vehicle for student to participate in corps activities. Students speak of choosing Texas A&M for the other education that the legacy and traditions that the corps of cadets offers them .

> I know that there are some opportunities that I have gotten in the Corps. as far as being in the Corps and through the Corps I have gotten opportunities to do other things that when I got here I never even knew existed or never would have thought I could do this or would have the chance to. ..It has just made me a better person. I know that I am capable of doing more. (FG4=3/3/98U.G. 1-27 cards 566-567)

As previously mentioned, the university has emerged from a formerly all-male military institution. There continues to exist a hierarchical administrative structure reflective of the former military heritage. This military model engenders leadership and thus the perception of leading and being the best of leaders is pervasive throughout the university's social , academic, and student life in general. Several students commented that: "A&M has the potential to produce such good quality leaders for people who are willing to do it [change]" (FG4=3/3/98U.G. 1-27 card number 555). Students often make reference to "gaining leadership" experience from the university that they would not have an opportunity to receive from other universities. In addition, they claim that the leadership qualities received while at the university will provide them with an edge in

the workplace. The students comment that the university with its host of leadership opportunities readily available through student life and organizational affiliation is the "magic bullet" that will provides them with the "stuff" that "puts out good Aggies" and leadership.

Student organization affiliation with Texas A&M provides students with leadership visibility that they believe will be recognized by the university, the community and the state. Students believe that Texas A&M will somehow teach them how to become leaders. The military ethos of the university might arguably provide this underlying assumption that the university will make them leaders, and provide them with the impetus to set high aspirations and goals. This idealistic view dovetails with the culture of leadership development that the military institution has imposed on the university. Whether unconsciously or by design the students speak of leadership and obtaining it from A&M synonymously.

This military influence coupled with conservative dogma from parents and further indoctrination during "Fish Camp", campus wide celebrations and traditions leads the student to the notion that Texas A& M and the degree conferred from the institution is superior to any others despite the national rankings from popular magazines and the media in general. There is profound belief that the Texas A&M degree is the zenith of all degrees conferred. Schools and industries are more likely to hire an A&M graduate than any other graduate. Texas A&M is seen as an omnipotent icon--an educational sanctuary for the select few. One student illustrates this notion by commenting that: "I really heard that like A&M was a big network. Like when you leave this institution it's such a big network. It's like your degree, your ring, it speaks." (FG3=10/29/97UG 1-30 p 21)

Students believe that, to paraphrase the TV commercial of years gone by, when an Aggie graduate, (or the Aggie ring is worn) speaks, people listen. Pervasive throughout the interviews were comments referring to the acquisition of "The Ring":

> "It's like the whole Aggie ring thing--everybody recognizes that you're from A&M and you have a good education."(FG 10/16/97 p 17)

> "I can't wait until the day I can be called and 'old Ag and have the Aggie ring. That's something I'm really looking forward to. ".(FG 10/16/97 p 17)

This tenet that the ring and the mere attendance at the institution will bring prosperity is also perpetuated during the college choice process.

For instance, the students at Texas A&M typically do not choose their university of choice by sitting in or visiting classes, asking questions about the curriculum, or researching the university before attending. Instead, the students choose Texas A&M university because of legacy, tradition and the age old art of persuasion and suggestion by parents and other former students. Several students noted that they came from a long line of Aggies, grandparents, parents and other relatives:

> "I came because my father was attending"
>
> (FG3=10/29/97UG 1-30 page 1)
>
> "My sister went here"(FG3=10/29/97UG 1-30 page 1)

> "I have a couple of cousins graduate that graduated in 92, and many people in my family came here so that was my motivation to attend this university" (FG3=10/29/97 UG 1-30 page 1)
>
> "...I came to A&M because I had an older sister here and she needed a roommate so that was my first reason...." (FG 5=4/16/98 UG page 2)
>
> "....I came down here cause most of my friends were coming down here and I have some friends that came down here before and I was just brainwashed from the very beginning..." (FG 5=4/16/98 UG page 2)

Coupled with the legacy and tradition of attending A&M, the typical student is satisfied with second hand knowledge that the university is good or someone's perception of good. "Not knowing much about Texas A&M, knowing that it is a very big school and a very good school, that is all I know." (**FG 5=416/98UG400**) The student is equipped and satisfied with second hand knowledge of the university but paradoxically does not know much about the university at all. However, this student much like the majority of students interviewed will more than likely find a comfortable fit into the atmosphere of conservatism, tradition and perception of safety that the institution seems to offer its students. This homogeneous perception discourages diversity and is further perpetuated through a common language of slang used to describe the many folks who do not fit comfortably into the environment. For instance, students who express the remote possibility they may not be entirely happy in College Station are invited to travel in either direction of Hiway 6 in order to alleviate the drudgery--the highway runs both ways and they can leave as easily as they came. In addition, those students who are ordained "eggheads", or who simply do not attend all sporting events, or are not deemed

to be true Aggies are supplemented with numerical parameters to display their lack of participation in Aggie-life: they are now 2 per centers. The only hope for these students is to, as Aggies see it, conform.

Student Change

Students typically leave home with great expectations for themselves--from parents, peers, and even from themselves. Included in those expectations connected to attending the university is that of student change. Despite the pervasive conservative traditions of Texas A&M University, students expect--and are expected--to change, not only academically but socially, emotionally and developmentally. Several students suggested this notion and one student in particular poignantly clarified that:

> I thought I would get independence from my family, but I thought I would only get book knowledge...attend my classes and then leave, but I have learned much more than that. **(FG3=10/29/97UG1-30 p 29)**

Students often referred to the "learning much more than that" when referring to social and emotional developmental processes of change that they receive through various sources and resources on the university campus. For instance, student's commented that the college experience in general "is going to change you no matter what " FG 10/16/97 p 19. During several focus groups students commented that the university will provide them with resources that they need in order to become successful socially, and academically. In other words; the university sometimes acts as direct socializing and developmental agent. However, when they were asked if they thought it was important for the university to try and change them, the answer was unequivocally

and unanimously, no. Instead, when they spoke of change agents they specifically stated that peers, parents and professors to some extent were change agents.

Role of Professors

In these processes of change students expressed certainty that to receive satisfactory grades and academic achievement, they must not only study, but gain some rapport with the professors in order to succeed while in college. This rapport is developed during their time at the university. Students needs to satisfy superficial dichotomies (right and wrong, good paper/ bad paper, good grade/ bad grade) and certain traditional epistemologies learned in another contextual environment, namely high school, are questioned during their time at the university. The student is now cognizant of a bigger picture: a picture that includes a relationship with the instructor. Students suggested that this unexpected rapport is developed throughout their academic careers. In addition, it is developed with the professor in conjunction with the university as described in the following commentary:

> Six or eight professors that really have shown me that only do they care about their class, but they care about their students, the rest of their lives, and their other classes. (FG=3/3/98U.G. 1027 card number 575)

When describing features that students think necessary for professors to be successful change agents in the developmental process, students typically outlined an education such as that offered by small private institutions or other liberal arts colleges. They want an intimate relationship with professors in terms of classroom teaching and advising, one-to-one individual attention, set office hours, and prompt responses to questions, whether in class or via e-mail. In addition, students speak of a quid pro quo.

Students commented that: "They(the faculty, teachers) kind of have to earn our respect in order for us to be open-minded and learn" (FG10/17/97.U.G. 12 card number 130). In essence, student's believe that they are entitled to some tangible services for fees as evidenced by the following students comment: "I mean, we're paying for the education and the salaries." (FG10/17/97U.G. 4 card number 44)

The majority of students interviewed, however, spoke favorably of their relationships with professors. Generally these associations were reciprocally respectful. Often, students referred to the professors as "change agents" in the career of a college student. Professors who have been helpful along the way in their academic careers were regularly commented upon. Their help was observed and appreciated. The characteristics of the individuals who helped in personal change processes were described and complimented. During several interviews, students commented that Dr. Rigsby was one of those professors that had been exceptional during their academic careers:

> One of the professors that I just know have I'd have to say is one of the true mentors as far as professors go at A&M and he is so inspirational--just the fact that he knows what kind of potential every single one of his students has and he goes for that. It's not like he's telling us you need to do this one and this one and this one--he leaves it up to you. There's just no other way around not wanting to better yourself after listening and talking to him. (FG3=10/29/97UG p.29)

> "Professor Rigsby. He is phenomenal. Seriously,... that man will make you cry" (F.G.=10/29/97U.G. p.29).

Students often expressed their frustrations with boredom in the classroom. They agreed that one of the qualities that they wanted from professors that helped them in the change process included Audra's descriptor of professors "making you cry"-- which meant to the students, engaging them by taking advantage in frequent teachable moments. In addition, what the students appear to speak of has been highlighted in Astin's 1982 theory of student involvement in which he encourages educators to focus less on what they do and more on what the student does. Not only do they speak of the resources they provide such as providing references for employment or graduate school several students commented on the relationships that they had developed with their professors.

> You just get really close with your professors. You really need them when you get out, and need references, or go to graduate school. (FG10.17/97.U.G. card number 227)

Faculty clearly have some impact on most students, however, as evidenced by substantial student commentary their role is minimal in comparison to peers and family as agents o f change

Parents as Agents of Change

The importance of parents was recognized early in the academic career of the students. After leaving home students saw their parents in a new light. People who for years, during junior high and high school, had been considered ill-equipped to give advice, understand adolescents, or "be cool" were now key resources in the life of the student. Mom and dad were now seen as suddenly smart. They actually "know some stuff". Several students commented on how they suddenly found themselves dependent on parents. In addition, many of them had already reconsidered the labor of their parents

in cooking, housecleaning, and laundry. Kim, a junior transfer student shares her experiences:

> Well I think like coming to school as a Freshman, you don't know how much you depend on your parents. You think you're a senior in high school. You're so independent. You don't need anybody. You get into college and you're like, Mom, Dad, who's getting my grocery shopping?...Who's picking up my clothes? Who is going to clean after I just made this huge mess? I think that's a small part of change. That's a small part of growing. I grew a lot. I am serious.(FG3=10/29/97 p)

Kim and the other students speak to how parents provide both external and internal support. External support comes in the form of money and resources such as tuition, books, travel and care packages. The internal support that students tend to notice and appreciate after leaving home takes the form of endless phone calls regarding professors, relationships with other students, boyfriends, and girlfriends, grades, campus experiences, and religious matters. The following students describe their evolving relationships with parents:

> I would not even call and make a doctors appointment. My mom did it...I wouldn't go the to the grocery store by myself. I wouldn't go to the bank myself, to the drive through window...I came down to A&M and I didn't know anybody" (FG3=10/29/97UG 1-30 page 26).

> ..I feel like me as a person when I came to Texas A&M I had some negative outlooks on A&M. I was calling my mama I said... I'm coming

> home, I'm not doing this. She was like Audra, calm down. You're just scared. You're intimidated and now I look at myself and I have to laugh" (FG3=10/29/97UG 1-30 page 24).

Student quickly learned that it was their parents that had taken care of the little day-today things that they ordinarily took for granted while living at home. A trip to the grocery store, the bank drive through window or the dentist office might well be compared to an awkward baby's first step, however, the student finds themselves able to accomplish little feats daily with the telephone guidance from the suddenly knowledgeable parent.

Peers and Self

When specifically queried how and why or if they had changed since arriving at Texas A&M, students almost unanimously reflected that the concept of self-help was a developmental task they were mastering. One student describes this experience of self reflection which greatly resembles that of Maslow's self actualization as noted below:

For me it's just like looking in the mirror. In high school you do things and then you come to college and you realize they were not very good things. I quit going to church. When I went to the other school I still did not go and when I came here I started to go again. That was personal from just by looking in the mirror and not liking what I had become but what I was not doing for myself. (FG2=10/21/97U.G. 21 card number 407)

'Learning stuff' was also commented upon by several students and generally meant student development and change through interactions with peers and the other

education. In fact, it can be inferred from the following student's comment that this 'stuff' could quite possibly have some substantial impact on the students college career.

> I just wanted a completely different experience than from what I have had my entire life. I wanted to learn stuff (FG =10/21/97/U.G. 18 card number 381).

In addition, peers were noted as being important change agents to the students. They recognized and valued small epiphanies from residence hall living arrangements, group activities, student organization work, structured volunteer and community work. Students often commented that their peers provided significant input into their college as well as home life. One student stated that "I've met the best friends that I think I will ever have. They will probably be my friends until I die"(FG5=4/16/98 p. 25).

When queried who has helped you change or grow while at Texas A&M one student stated ever so cleverly that he now had 43,000 friends compared to the 5000 that he had in high school" (FG 10/16/97 p21)and in some instances these peers were quite different from the ones they encountered while in high school. The following student's comment helps to illustrate this point:

> I did not always think people were of the same mold, but I always hung out with people from the same mold and now I just hang out with everybody. There is so much to learn from so many different people that my mind is sort of be open to that (FG2=10/21/97UG 1-25 p.18).

> Maybe it's just me because I'm in anthropology but I have a lot of appreciation for different cultures and I just think the people I've talked to here, not all of them but a lot people are close-minded...(FG101697 p 16).

It is interesting to note that, although the campus engenders a homogeneous atmosphere some students not only became more aware of peers from different backgrounds and cultures, but they learned to appreciate and embrace relationships with people different from themselves.

Implications

Structural features, such as the institutions general environment, the quality of life, student effort, and the student's interactions with peers and faculty members are believed to have an indirect rather than a direct influence on student development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). However, Texas A&M as an institution adopts the role of a deliberate socializing agent, and therefore may play a larger and more direct role in the college student's development and change processes. Students bring with them to Texas A&M a series of expectations: they believe that the A&M degree is "the best baccalaureate degree in the state", that this degree "will open doors" (especially with respect to employment) not open to graduates of other institutions, and that their leadership skills will be better than those of graduates of other institutions. Counter to what the popular press argues, neither these students nor their parents are worried about the availability of jobs. These students arrive on campus expecting the 'other' education. They have specific requirements outlined for their professors and specific understandings for what they hope to achieve. The institution's structures characteristics and traditions

have been created and refined in such a way that they are consistent with , and affirm, student expectations and the specific forms of change which they have been led to expect by alumni.

At the same time, student bridle at the idea that personal change is somehow intended by the administration of the institution. They understand that they will change. They have specific and even value the potential changes, but are uneasy about the creation of an intentionally developmental environment. Although primarily faculty are designated socializing agents, intended to act on the behalf of the institution of higher education to train, develop, modify, or in some way "act upon" the individual [student] in formal ways. (Feldman and Newcomb, 1969, p 227-228). Students and their peers are believed to be the primary contributors to socialization.

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